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PRAIRIE GEM RANCH, SMITHWICK, S. D.

February 25, 1949

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U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

GREETINGS: We have been snowbound. Now after days of thawing the depressions of our rolling terrain hold the white stuff, the upper ground is free and the outlook is better. Warmth has been more effective than even the army snowplow that rescued us, for the second time, just Monday of last week. The garden is a smooth knoll of snow, captured by the windbreak lilacs and pines at the west, up to six feet high. It should give the plants a wonderful springtime.

The great blizzard, beginning Jan. 2nd, brought novelty for a brief time, then no fun at all, activities being quickly reduced to the primitive and man power and endurance becoming saving resources in trying to care for ourselves and ninety head of cattle—Prairie Gem is, firstly, a cattle ranch. With about 5 percent loss in cattle and horses we feel we are still on top.

It is incidental that a spring plant catalog, some weeks past due, has not been written. May we ask you to make up your order from the latest copy at hand? It will have our appreciative attention. With reduced advertising and a curtailed mailing list we will be able to give the cattle extra care, repair the miles of fence slackened and broken by the drifts, and get your plants out at the preferred date.

Thank you, and may the air be soft and the rain fall gently on your garden in '49.

CLAUDE A. BARR.